

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 AID-05

PC-01 /058 W

----- 130270

R 301140Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5640

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6339

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: SANJAY--TOO FAR, TOO PUBLIC?

REF: NEW DELHI 3255

1. SANJAY GANDHI HAS SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE FRONT PAGES OF THE INDIAN PRESS. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF HIM SINCE APRIL 22 WHEN A BRIEF ITEM IN THE "NATIONAL HERALD" REPORTED HE WOULD BE IN AGRA ON MAY 2 ACCOMPANIED BY CHIEF MINISTER N.D. TEWARI. WE (AND OTHERS WE SPEAK TO) ARE UNABLE FULLY TO EXPLAIN THIS ECLIPSE, BUT THE REPORTS AND STORIES WE HAVE HEARD INDICATE THAT PERHAPS THE CROWN PRINCE HAD BECOME TOO ACTIVE WITH TOO MUCH FANFARE AND DISPLEASED MOTHER. HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH FAMILY PLANNING CAMPS IN OLD DELHI WOULD ALSO SUGGEST THE WISDOM OF A LOWER PROFILE AT THIS TIME.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER RETURNED FROM HER FIVE DAY HOLIDAY AT SIMLA ON APRIL 20 ACCOMPANIED BY SANJAY AND WIFE MENAKA, ALL DULY REPORTED IN THE PRESS WITH PICTURES ON APRIL 21, THE LAST DATE A PHOTOGRAPH OF SANJAY APPEARED. WE HAVE A REPORT FROM ONE OF OUR SENIOR JOURNALIST CONTACTS  
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(CONFIRMED ESLEWHERE) THAT BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE,

CONGRESS PRESIDENT D.K. BAROOAH CABLED ALL CHIEF MINISTERS INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR THEM TO MEET SANJAY WHEN THE LATTER VISITED THEIR STATES. OUR JOURNALIST FRIEND SAID THE INTNET WAS CLEAR--DON'T MEET SANJAY\*

3. ON APRIL 11 SANJAY APPEARED ON THE PODIUM WITH INDIAN FILM STARS AT A FAMILY PLANNING FUND RAISING FUNCTION AND WAS DENIED ANY APPLAUSE BY THE CROWD IN SPITE OF THE PROMPTING BY THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. THE INCIDENT PROVED EMBARRASSING WHEN AFTER THE SECOND ATTEMPT TO ELICIT A RESPONSE, THE AUDIENCE BEGAN TI TITTER.

4. ON APRIL 15 SANJAY VISITED THE FAMILY PLANNING CAMP AT DUJANA HOUSE, NEAR THE MAJA MASJID. REPORTS GOING ABOUT THE CURCUIT IN DELHI HAVE IT THAT HE BECAME SO FASCINATED BY THE PROCEDURES THAT HE ASKED TO SEE SOME FASECTOMIES PERFORMED. THE MALES OSTENSIBLY GOING THROUGH THE LINE WERE ROLE PLAYERS, NOT VOLUNTARY SUBJECTS FOR STERILIZATION, BUT SUDDENLY FOUND THEMSELVES UNDER THE KNIFE. ONE WAS AN UNMARRIED YOUTH. THE DISTRUBANCES IN THIS AREA (NEW DELHI 5734) BROKE OUT ON APRIL 19. A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE TELLS US THAT A YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE WOMAN WITH CONSIDERABLE "HISTORY" HAD BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF THE FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC BY SANJAY TO THE ANNOYANCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN TROUBLE BROKE OUT.

5. EARLIER THIS WEEK HE IS REPORTED BY PRESS SOURCES TO HAVE APPEARED AT A LOCAL DELHI CONGRESS PARTY MEETING, LOOKED AROUND FOR THREE MINUTES (BY ONE PHOTOGRAPHER'S WATCH) AND THEN WALKED OUT.

6. HE IS STILL SEEN PRIVATELY (MOST RECENTLY AT DINNER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER BY AMBASSADOR SAXBE APRIL 27), BUT OUR GUESS IS THAT DURING THEIR SIMLA HOLIDAY LAST WEEK, THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD SANJAY IT MIGHT BEBETTER IF HE LOWERED HIS PROFILE FOR A BIT AND STOPPED MAKING POLITICAL WAVES. IF SO, IT INDICATES (A) THE PRIME MINISTER STILL HAS A FIRM GRIP ON HER SON'S POLITICAL LIFE; AND (B) SANJAY'S OWN POLITICAL JUDGMENTS NEED CONSIDERABLE

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MATURING AND THE PRIME MINISTER MAY BE SHOWING SIGNS OF ACKNOWLEDGING THIS. WE'LL WATCH HOW LONG SANJAY'S POLITICAL COVENTRY LASTS.  
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## Message Attributes

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